IN THE SPECIFICATION:

The specification as amended below with replacement paragraphs shows added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~.

Please REPLACE the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 21, with the following paragraph:

With the present invention, an authenticator is prepared by utilizing intermediate data generated when ~~other the~~ the other authenticator is created, so that generation of the authenticator is made more complicated, which makes it still difficult for a third party to forge the authenticator.

Please REPLACE the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 16, with the following paragraph:

The hash units 2 have one-way functions ~~for converting the data DI to Dn using keys K1 to Kn to authentication signs CS1 to CSn respectively~~ that converts, using keys K1 to Kn, the data D1 to Dn into authentication signs CS1 to CSn respectively, and they output the converted authentication signs CS1 to CSn to the linking unit 5. Although it is assumed that the hash units 2 perform processing corresponding to a known hash function in a protocol or the like for a method of verifying authentication signs based on the conventional technology, it is not always required that reverse conversion is ensured.